

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A program distribution system comprising:

a receiver; and

a transmitter;

said receiver being operable to accept a user request for a desired program, the user request being in a free style text format, to convert the user request into a distribution request e-mail message that includes the user request, and to send the distribution request e-mail message to said transmitter;

said transmitter including:

a distributable program storing unit operable to store a plurality of distributable programs, ~~+~~

a distribution controller operable to receive ~~said the~~ distribution request e-mail message, to determine whether the requested program is one of the stored plurality of distributable programs, and if a selected program corresponding to said distribution request has been stored in said distributable program storing unit, to read out said selected the requested program from said distributable program storing and unit when the requested program is one of the stored plurality of distributable programs, ~~a receiver operable to transmit a request for distribution of one of said distributable programs;~~ and

a distributor operable to distribute ~~said selected the~~ requested program to said receiver.

2. (currently amended) The program distribution system according to claim 1, wherein said distributable program storing unit is further operable to store an associated title for each of said the plurality of distributable programs ~~has a title stored in said distributable program storing unit, and~~

said distribution controller is further operable to compares ~~a~~ each word ~~described in said distribution of the user~~ request with each of ~~said the~~ stored titles, and to reads out ~~said selected the~~ requested program from said distributable program storing unit when ~~said the~~ user request includes a title associated with one of the stored plurality of distributable ~~said selected programs corresponds to said word.~~

3. (currently amended) The program distribution system according to claim 1, wherein said receiver is further operable to include a predetermined expression in the distribution request ~~is converted into an e-mail message to indicate that the user request and is being transmitted to said~~ distribution controller.

4. (cancelled).

5. (currently amended) The program distribution system according to claim 1, wherein ~~if said selected program is stored in said distributable program storing unit,~~ said distribution controller is further operable to transmits an answer e-mail message a notice of correspondence to said receiver in response to the distribution request e-mail message, the answer e-mail message including a notice of correspondence when the requested program is one of the stored plurality of distributable programs.

6. (currently amended) The program distribution system according to claim 2, wherein ~~if said title of said selected program corresponds to said word,~~ said distribution controller is further operable to transmits a notice of correspondence an answer e-mail message to said receiver in response to the distribution request e-mail message, the answer e-mail message including a notice of correspondence when the user request includes a title associated with one of the stored plurality of distributable programs.

7. (currently amended) The program distribution system according to claim 51, wherein, ~~if said receiver is further operable to transmit a confirmation e-mail message to said distribution controller in response to the answer e-mail message when the answer e-mail message includes the notice of correspondence, the confirmation e-mail message indicating that the user of said receiver has agreed to purchase the requested selected program is stored in said distributable program storing unit,~~ said distribution controller readings out said selected the requested program from said distributable program storing unit when said distribution controller receives a notice of the confirmation e-mail message ~~that the user of said receiver agrees to purchase said selected program.~~

8. (currently amended) The program distribution system according to claim 62, wherein ~~if said receiver is further operable to transmit a confirmation e-mail message to said distribution controller in response to the answer e-mail message when the answer e-mail message includes the notice of correspondence, the confirmation e-mail message indicating that the user of said receiver has agreed to purchase the requested title of said selected program corresponds to said word,~~ said distribution controller readings out said selected the requested program from said distributable program storing unit when said distribution controller receives a notice of the confirmation e-mail message ~~that the user of said receiver agrees to purchase said selected program.~~

9. (currently amended) The program distribution system according to claim 5, further comprising a recorder connected to said receiver, and wherein said distribution controller is further operable to include supplemental information in the answer e-mail message, ~~transmits to said receiver the supplemental information including a control~~

~~command to for causing a video tape said recorder connected to said receiver to record said selected the requested program by attaching said control command to said notice of correspondence.~~

10. (currently amended) The program distribution system according to claim 6, further comprising a recorder connected to said receiver, and wherein said distribution controller is further operable to include supplemental information in the answer e-mail message, ~~transmits to said receiver the supplemental information including a control command to for causing a video tape said recorder connected to said receiver to record said selected the requested program by attaching said control command to said notice of correspondence.~~

11. (currently amended) A method of distributing a ~~selected programs to a receiver,~~ said method comprising:

receiving transmitting a distribution request e-mail message describing said selected program from said a receiver, the distribution request e-mail message including a user request for a desired program, the user request being in a free style text format to a transmitter;

determining whether comparing said selected the requested program with is one of a stored plurality of distributable programs stored in a distributable program storing unit;

reading out said selected the requested program from said distributable program storing unit if said when selected the requested program is one of said the stored plurality of distributable programs; and

distributing said selected the requested program to said the receiver.

12. (currently amended) The method ~~of distributing a selected program~~ according to claim 11, wherein an associated title is stored for each of said the plurality of distributable

~~programs, has a title stored in said distributable program storing unit and said comparison determining step includes comparinges a each word described in said distribution of the user request with each of said the stored titles, and said distributing reading out step reads out said selected the requested program from said distributable program storing unit and distributes said selected program to said receiver when said the user request includes a title associated with one of said selected the stored plurality of distributable programs corresponds to said word.~~

13. (currently amended) ~~The method of distributing a selected program according to claim 11, wherein said the distribution request is converted into an e-mail message includes a predetermined expression to indicate that the user request is being and transmitted to said transmitter.~~

14. (cancelled).

15. (currently amended) ~~The method of distributing a selected program according to claim 11, wherein, if said selected program is stored in said distributable program storing unit, said distributing step further comprising transmittings an answer e-mail message to the receiver in response to the distribution request e-mail message, the answer e-mail message including a notice of correspondence when the requested program is one of the stored plurality of distributable programs to said receiver.~~

16. (currently amended) ~~The method of distributing a selected program according to claim 12, wherein, if said title of said selected program corresponds to said word, said distributing step further comprising transmittings an answer e-mail message to the receiver in response to the distribution request e-mail message, the answer e-mail message including a notice of correspondence when the user request includes a title~~

associated with one of the stored plurality of distributable programsto said receiver.

17. (currently amended) ~~The method of distributing a selected program according to claim 1511, further comprising receiving a confirmation e-mail message from the receiver in response to the answer e-mail message when the answer e-mail message includes the notice of correspondence, the confirmation e-mail message indicating that the user of the receiver has agreed to purchase the requested program, and wherein if said selected program is stored in said distributable program storing unit, said reading step reads out said selected program from said distributable program storing unit and said distributing step are carried out only distributes said selected program to said receiver when a notice of the confirmation e-mail message that the user of said receiver agrees with the purchase of said selected program is received from said receiver.~~

18. (currently amended) ~~The method of distributing a selected program according to claim 1612, further comprising receiving a confirmation e-mail message from the receiver in response to the answer e-mail message when the answer e-mail message includes the notice of correspondence, the confirmation e-mail message indicating that the user of the receiver has agreed to purchase the requested program, and wherein, if said title of said selected program corresponds to said word, said reading step reads out said selected program from said distributable program storing unit and said distributing step are carried out only distributes said selected program to said receiver when a notice of the confirmation e-mail message that the user of said receiver agrees with the purchase of said selected program is received from said receiver.~~

19. (currently amended) ~~The method of distributing a selected program according to claim 15, wherein said~~

~~distributing—transmitting~~ step includes further ~~comprises~~ transmitting supplemental information in the answer e-mail message, to said receiver the supplemental information including a control command ~~to~~ for causing a ~~video tape recorder~~ connected to ~~said the~~ receiver to record ~~said selected the~~ requested program ~~by adding said control command to said notice of correspondence.~~

20. (currently amended) The method ~~of distributing a selected program~~ according to claim 16, wherein said ~~distributing—transmitting~~ step includes further ~~comprises~~ transmitting supplemental information in the answer e-mail message, to said receiver the supplemental information including a control command to cause a ~~video tape recorder~~ connected to ~~said the~~ receiver to record ~~said selected the~~ requested program ~~by adding said control command to said notice of correspondence.~~

21. (currently amended) A transmitter ~~for distributing a selected program described in a distribution request transmitted from a receiver,~~ comprising:

a distributable program storing unit operable to store a plurality of distributable programs;

a distribution controller operable to receive the distribution request e-mail message from a receiver, the distribution request e-mail message including a user request for a desired program, the user request being in a free style text format, to determine whether the requested program is one of the stored plurality of distributable programs, and to read out said selected the requested program from said distributable program storing unit if said when selected the requested program corresponds to a word is one of the stored in said plurality of distributable programs storing unit; and

a distributor operable to distribute ~~said selected the~~ requested program to the receiver.

22. (currently amended) The transmitter according to claim 21, wherein said distributable program storing unit is further operable to store an associated title for each of said the plurality of distributable programs ~~has a title stored in said distributable program storing unit,~~ and said distribution controller is further operable to compares a each word described in said distribution of the user request with each of said the stored titles and to reads out said selected the requested program from said distributable program storing unit when said the user request includes a title associated with one of the stored plurality of distributable said selected programs ~~corresponds to said word.~~

23. (currently amended) The transmitter according to claim 21, wherein ~~said the distribution request is converted into an e-mail~~ message includes a predetermined expression that indicates that the user request is being transmittedreceiving said distribution controller.

24. (cancelled).

25. (currently amended) The transmitter according to claim 21, wherein ~~if said selected program is stored in said distributable program storing unit,~~ said distribution controller is further operable to transmits an answer e-mail message a notice of correspondence to said the receiver in response to the distribution request e-mail message, the answer e-mail message including a notice of correspondence when the requested program is one of the stored plurality of distributable programs.

26. (currently amended) The transmitter according to claim 22, wherein ~~if said title of said selected program corresponds to said word,~~ said distribution controller is further operable to transmits an answer e-mail message a notice of correspondence to said the receiver in response to the distribution request e-mail message, the answer e-mail message

including a notice of correspondence when the user request includes a title associated with one of the stored plurality of distributable programs.

27. (currently amended) The transmitter according to claim ~~2521~~, wherein, ~~if said selected program corresponding to said distribution request is stored in said distributable program storing unit~~ said distribution controller reads out ~~said selected~~ the requested program from said distributable program storing unit when said distribution~~ing~~ controller receives a confirmation e-mail message that is sent by the receiver in response to the answer e-mail message when the answer e-mail message includes the notice of correspondence, the notice of confirmation e-mail message indicating that the user of said the receiver has agreeds to purchase ~~said the selected~~ the requested program.

28. (currently amended) The transmitter according to claim ~~2622~~, wherein ~~if said title of said selected program corresponds to said word,~~ said distribution controller reads out ~~said selected~~ the requested program from said distributable program storing unit when said distributable controller receives a confirmation e-mail message that is sent by the receiver in response to the answer e-mail message when the answer e-mail message includes the notice of correspondence, the notice of confirmation e-mail message indicating that the user of said the receiver has agreeds to purchase ~~said selected the requested~~ program.

29. (currently amended) The transmitter according to claim 25, wherein said distribution controller is further operable to include supplemental information in the answer e-mail message, transmits to said receiver the supplemental information including a control command to for causing a ~~video~~ tape-recorder connected to ~~said the~~ receiver to record said

~~selected the requested program by attaching said control command to said notice of correspondence.~~

30. (currently amended) The transmitter according to claim 26, wherein said distribution controller is further operable to include supplemental information in the answer e-mail message, ~~transmits to said receiver the supplemental information including a control command to~~ for causing a ~~video~~ tape recorder connected to said ~~the~~ receiver to record said ~~selected the requested program by attaching said control command to said notice of correspondence.~~

31. (currently amended) A receiver, comprising:

a controller ~~transmitter~~ operable to accept a user request for a desired program, the user request being in a free style text format, to convert the user request into a distribution request e-mail message that includes the user request, and to send ~~transmit a request for the distribution request e-mail message of a specified distributable program to a~~ predetermined distribution unit; and

a front end ~~receiver~~ operable to receive said ~~specified distributable~~ the requested program from said the predetermined distribution unit when the requested program is available from the predetermined distribution unit ~~according to said distribution request.~~

32. (currently amended) The receiver according to claim 31, wherein said controller is further operable to include a predetermined expression in the distribution request ~~is converted into an e-mail message to indicate that the user request is being and transmitted to said predetermined distribution unit.~~

33. (cancelled).

34. (currently amended) The receiver according to claim 31, wherein said controller ~~receiver~~ is further operable

to receive an answer e-mail message sent by the ~~from said~~ predetermined distribution unit in response to the distribution request e-mail message, the answer e-mail message including a notice of correspondence ~~confirming that said specified distributable~~ when the requested program is available from said the predetermined distribution unit.

35. (currently amended) The receiver according to claim ~~3431~~, wherein, ~~if said notice of correspondence is received, said transmitter controller is further operable to transmits~~ a confirmation e-mail message to said ~~the~~ predetermined distribution unit ~~a~~ when the answer e-mail message includes the notice of correspondence, the confirmation e-mail message indicating that the user of said receiver has agreed ~~s~~ to purchase ~~said specified distributable the requested program.~~

36. (currently amended) The receiver according to claim 31, wherein the answer e-mail message received by said ~~receiver receives controller includes supplemental information, the supplemental information including a control command from said predetermined distribution unit to~~ for causing a video ~~tape~~ recorder connected to said receiver to record ~~said specified distributable the requested program.~~

37. (new) A method of receiving programs, said method comprising:

accepting a user request for a desired program, the user request being in a free style text format;

converting the user request into a distribution request e-mail message that includes the user request;

sending the distribution request e-mail message to a predetermined distribution unit; and

receiving the requested program from the predetermined distribution unit when the requested program is available from the predetermined distribution unit.

38. (new) The method according to claim 37, wherein the distribution request e-mail message includes a predetermined expression to indicate that the user request is being sent.

39. (new) The method according to claim 37, further comprising receiving an answer e-mail message sent by the predetermined distribution unit in response to the distribution request e-mail message, the answer e-mail message including a notice of correspondence when the requested program is available from the predetermined distribution unit.

40. (new) The method according to claim 39, further comprising transmitting a confirmation e-mail message to the predetermined distribution unit when the answer e-mail message includes the notice of correspondence, the confirmation e-mail message indicating that the user has agreed to purchase the requested program.

41. (new) The method according to claim 37, wherein the answer e-mail message includes supplemental information, the supplemental information including a control command for causing a recorder record the received program.

42. (new) The program distribution system according to claim 9, wherein the supplemental information includes information selected from the group consisting of the time of the program, the price of the program, cryptanalytic information for decrypting the program, and accounting information for the program.

43. (new) The program distribution system according to claim 10, wherein the supplemental information includes information selected from the group consisting of the time of the program, the price of the program, cryptanalytic information for decrypting the program, and accounting information for the program.

44. (new) The method according to claim 19, wherein the supplemental information includes information selected from the group consisting of the time of the program, the price of the program, cryptanalytic information for decrypting the program, and accounting information for the program.

45. (new) The method according to claim 20, wherein the supplemental information includes information selected from the group consisting of the time of the program, the price of the program, cryptanalytic information for decrypting the program, and accounting information for the program.

46. (new) The transmitter according to claim 29, wherein the supplemental information includes information selected from the group consisting of the time of the program, the price of the program, cryptanalytic information for decrypting the program, and accounting information for the program.

47. (new) The transmitter according to claim 30, wherein the supplemental information includes information selected from the group consisting of the time of the program, the price of the program, cryptanalytic information for decrypting the program, and accounting information for the program.

48. (new) The receiver according to claim 36, wherein the supplemental information includes information selected from the group consisting of the time of the program, the price of the program, cryptanalytic information for decrypting the program, and accounting information for the program.

49. (new) The method according to claim 41, wherein the supplemental information includes information selected from the group consisting of the time of the program, the price of the program, cryptanalytic information for decrypting the program, and accounting information for the program.